

Please see letter recently received from an Alumni. (Nov 2018)

Dear Mrs Doyle,

I was absolutely fascinated to stumble across the 1959/60 form photograph posted onto the past pupil news section of your website. I immediately recognised the girl in the very centre of the picture, Janet ? (17), as my younger sister **Janet Richards**. I have shared the photograph with her and she confirms this fact, adding that she recognises many of the names and faces.

I am two years older than my sister and was therefore at this time in my final year at SMA preparing for the 11+ examination under the tutelage of the definitely formidable Mrs Fraser. I had transferred to SMA from Avonmore school near Olympia in 1956 for the final four years of my primary education and was in forms 4A and 3A (with Miss Statham), 2A (with Miss or Mrs Blunt) and 1A (with the aforementioned Mrs Fraser). Other members of staff that I recall are Mr Hill, Mrs Jones, Mr Joy, Mr Campbell, Mr Norton, Miss Maycock and the school caretaker Mr Cumbley (or something like that). I still have in my possession a book given as a prize in 1958 and a number of my school reports that our mother dutifully retained. It is amazing to report that throughout this period there were between 41 and 42 pupils in the class! Amongst that number there were the following; Jeremy Tafler (son of the actor Sydney Tafler), Philip (Pip) Jackman (elder brother of Angela in the photograph), Ian Brummer and myself who continued onto Latymer Upper school; Chandra Muktramata (?), Michael Willey, Michael Schindler and Richard Sherman who went onto Westminster City school; Peter Grey (or Gray) who went onto Emanuel school; Diana Bewick (elder sister of Douglas Bewick in the photograph) who went onto Putney High school, Julia Welch who went onto Lady Margaret school and Michael Edwards who went onto Holland Park school. Others that I recall include Veronica Maritz who lived in the Royal Dutch embassy on Hyde Park Gate, Joanna Goodwin, Pierre Davidson, Bobby Kimber (elder brother of Mary in the photograph), Guy Harding and Marsha Mendoza (or Mendosa). I am sure with that a bit more thought I could drag a few more names from the recesses of my memory.

I can remember collecting clothes for Hungarian refugees (must have been in 1956), playing an old shepherd in the Nativity play and participating in the high jump event at school sports days, sometimes held on the big field in Holland Park. Rather than representing our forms we competed for houses of which there were four, each denoted by different coloured shields on the wall in the school hall. They were Thackery house (blue), Campden house (red), Leighton house (yellow) and Fox house (Green). I was in Thackery house.

I still live in West London and when visiting Kensington occasionally wander past the school and along Kensington Church Walk, past what are now very upmarket shops. I recall that in those days they were a little more down-at-heel and included two newsagents/ tobacconist shops, one run by a kindly old man called Mr Pollard and his wife, who would sell you farthing chews and halfpenny drinks. Times change!

Like your correspondent who submitted the original photograph, I am now retired and have the time to indulge myself in researching my own and our family's history and renewing old contacts. Both my sister and I would be very interested to hear from anyone from the same period who is interested to do so.

Best regards, Geoffrey Richards

SMA 1956 - 1960